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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMCONGEN, Lagos, Nigeria

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DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

NEA
MESSAGE NO.

November 19, 1951
DATE

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

SUBJECT: Fortnightly Review - November 4 to November 17, 1951

REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 7/16/82

RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
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POLITICAL

Elections

The chief political activity of the period concerned itself with last minute preparations for elections on November 20, 1951, to determine which men shall fill the five Lagos seats in the Western House. All parties are asking the support of the voters and, of course, promising everything. Political observers say they would not be surprised if all five seats were captured by Azikiwe's NCNC. Of the thirteen candidates who are contesting the election, Zik seems the surest to win.

In the electioneering campaign of the AG party, its leader has said that, once in power, the AG would undertake extensive reform of the Nigerian civil service. Such policy, the statement indicated, contemplates complete Nigerianization of the Service, which obviously means elimination of the British who now hold the key jobs. The Africans seem generally dissatisfied with the present Service, and the AG should win supporters with this line.

Party Switches

The NCNC has released a statement accusing Mr. T. A. Odutola and Mr. S. Akinola of having switched party affiliations. The release reports these men were elected on the NCNC ticket and later avowed themselves to be members of the Action Group.

Police Serve Zik Press with Summons for Sedition

On November 16, 1951, police served the subject summons for sedition. According to the Government, Zik's Press, on October 27, 1951, printed a seditious article in the "West African Pilot" entitled "Goodnight to Colonial Freedom", after news had been received of the Tory victory in England. The case is to be called on November 19, 1951.

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Effect of Tory Victory in England on West African Colonies

Indicative of hysteria of much of the press, concerning the subject victory, is the editorial quoted below, from Zik's "West African Pilot":

"The Tory victory over the Labour in British politics and the present world situation bring to the forefront the question of the future of the colonial peoples. The question causes grave concern out here especially as countries in Africa and Asia find it difficult to reconcile the declaration of the Atlantic Charter to which Churchill was a signatory, which states in part -- "they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live.....", with the Tory colonial policy.

"Lined up with carved and pharisaic faces, the new British parliamentarians seem not to appreciate colonial advancement under Labour. As their manifesto shows, it is not their intention to continue where Labour was forced to close up; but they are determined to revert to the obsolete tradition of Tory's gradualism.

"Bark, cry [illegible] even bite -- to them the Empire is not something to be brok[illegible]. Further is the tripe that there are some colonies in Africa dedicated to Britain to ensure her continued existence in a chequered world. What a sore judgment!

"From now on it shall be one thing before us -- the Churchillian cry for more tin, more uranium, more manganese. Extensive surveys for minerals to keep Merry England going will be drummed into our ears. Our lands shall be ruthlessly besieged and laid waste, and this notwithstanding our poverty so often mentioned by them. When the famous lines of an English poet "the old order changeth yieldin place to new" make no impression on the Tories, it is doubtful that this colonial manifesto will fall on sympathetic ears."

New Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Oliver Lyttleton) Promises Continued Support for Colonies

Mr. Lyttleton's public statements that: (1) he would not go back on any political changes that have taken place in the colonies; (2) he would always be willing to examine any new proposals; (3) he would honor any promises made, and (4) he would adopt the attitude that it is as important to encourage the development of self-government in the colonies as it is to insure economic development, should tend to quiet some of the already expressed fears as to the effects of Tory policy on the colonies.

ECONOMIC

Vegetable Oilseeds Crops

Peanuts

The remainder of the 1950/51 crop will be shipped out of the buying areas by the end of November and buying of the 1951/52 crop began early in the month. Export shipments from the 1950/51 crop totalled only 142,743 long tons as compared with 1950,000 for the previous year. Favorable rains, increased acreage and higher yields have prompted very high estimates, in the neighborhood of 325,000 long tons, for the 1951/52 crop. The average buying price for this crop is to be £35-7-0 per ton.

Sesame Seed

A price of £32 per ton for the 1951/52 crop has been announced (£12 higher than the price paid for the 1950/51 crop) and estimates for a very good crop are being made. Exports from the past crop totalled 9,150 long tons, a low year.

Soya Beans

A "good" crop is predicted for the 1951/52 season and it will be bought at 10 shillings per long ton higher than the 1950/51 crop; of which 3,520 long tons were exported.

Cottonseed

The 1950/51 crop yielded exports of almost double what was expected, reaching over 42,000 long tons. 11,500 tons of cottonseed were consumed locally from the past crop. A total 1951/52 crop of at least 50,000 long tons is predicted and the buying price will be higher than last year, although the exact price has not been announced.

Palm Kernels

1951 exports of palm kernels are expected to total about 330,000 long tons. No price for the 1952 marketing year has yet been announced, but a raise in the purchase rate is expected.

Elephants Are New Pests to Cocoa

Several pests, including the swollen shoot disease, have been known to threaten the cocoa industry in Nigeria, and everything is being done to destroy them. But it is not known whether anything could be done to destroy the new elephant "pests" which

were recently observed at a cocoa farm at Tombel in the Cameroons.

There was a herd of about fifteen to twenty elephants, comprising bulls, cows, and calves, and the damage caused was considerable. Banana plants were flattened like grass, and mature cocoa trees uprooted as if they were no stronger than seedlings.

Heavy Lorry Traffic

Protests by the Union of Lorry Owners over the protracted delays encountered in examination to determine the road-worthiness of lorries have resulted, in the Eastern Provinces, in steps to ease the situation. The examining staff will be enlarged by the addition of qualified police officers and certain qualified administrative officers, and enforcement of those "road traffic ordinances" which do not affect road safety will, as a temporary measure, be interpreted as leniently as possible.

Air Travel to Expand

The British Overseas Airways Corporation, parent company of the West African Airways Corporation, has announced that it expects to have eight of the new jet airliners, the DeHavilland Comet, in operation by the end of the year. It expects to be in possession of the total order of twenty Comets within two years. The first regular jet airline service from Britain across Africa is due to begin in about three months and it is assumed that at least one of the north-south routes will be through Kano, Lagos or Accra to Johannesburg and return.

OTHER

Passport Thefts

Ex-Immigration Police Corporal Ajayi Busari has been returned to Nigeria from London, where he was apprehended, and charged in a Lagos court on November 14, 1951 on twelve counts of forging passports, passport application forms and making false entry in passport register. Hearing of the case has been fixed for November 20 and the accused has been refused bail. These charges are direct result of the passport thefts reported from the Immigration Office some two to three months ago.

A. W. Childs
Consul General

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